

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8234
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3161

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UN PLO LE IS MARR
SUBJ: COMMENTS OF UNLOB CHIEF ON SOUTH LEBANON

1. EMBOFF MET JUNE 8 WITH COL. JEAN ESPINASSY, HEAD OF THE UNITED NATIONS LIAISON OFFICE/BEIRUT (UNLOB). ESPINASSY HAD PARTICIPATED IN GENERAL SIILASVUO'S MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS AND PRIME MINISTER HOSS ON JUNE 5 AND YASIR ARAFAT'S MEETING WITH GENERAL ERSKINE ON JUNE 2. ESPINASSY OFFERED THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:
2. CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS, SIILASVUO HAD NOT TOLD HOSS AND BOUTROS THAT ISRAEL WISHED TO KEEP OBSERVATION POSTS IN LEBANON AFTER WITHDRAWING ON JUNE 13. ESPINASSY SAID ISRAEL MIGHT HAVE MADE SUCH A DEMAND TO SIILASVUO, BUT THE SUBJECT HAD NOT COME UP IN THE DECISIONS BETWEEN HIM AND THE LEBANESE.

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3. ARAFAT HAD TOLD ERSKINE NOTHING NEW. ARAFAT HAD REITERATED THAT THE PALESTINIANS NOW IN SOUTH LEBANON WERE THERE BEFORE UNIFIL ARRIVED AND HAD THE RIGHT TO REMAIN THERE. ARAFAT HAD NOT SPECIFICALLY PROMISED TO REFRAIN FROM INFILTRATING ARMED MEN THROUGH UNIFIL'S LINES, BUT HAD REPEATED THAT THE PLO WOULD REFRAIN FROM HOSTILE ACTION AGAINST UNIFIL.

ERSKINE HAD REPEATED THAT THE PLO HAD THE RIGHT TO RESUPPLY ITS PEOPLE SOUTH OF THE LITANI WITH NON-MILITARY GOODS. (ESPINASSY ESTIMATED THE PALESTINIANS HAD TWO TO THREE BATTALIONS, ABOUT 1000 TO 1500 MEN, IN THE TYRE POCKET, AND ONE BATTALION, ABOUT 500 MEN, ELSEWHERE SOUTH OF THE LITANI.)

4. ARAFAT HAD PROMISED TO ALLOW UNIFIL TO PUT OBSERVERS IN CHATEAU BEAUFORT. (ESPINASSY COMMENTED THAT UNIFIL HAD SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO PLACE ANY OBSERVERS THERE, BECAUSE THE LOCAL PALESTINIANS RAISED OBSTACLES EVERY TIME UNIFIL TRIED TO DO SO.)

5. ESPINASSY SAID THAT UNIFIL HAD NOT YET DECIDED HOW IT WOULD DEPLOY UNITS IN THE AREAS ISRAEL WAS SUPPOSED TO ABANDON ON JUNE 13, LARGELY BECAUSE THE GOL HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHAT OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES TO GIVE UNIFIL. THE ISRAELIS HAD TOLD UNIFIL THAT ITS DEPLOYMENT IN THESE AREAS SHOULD BE WORKED OUT WITH THE GOL. ESPINASSY, HOWEVER, FEARED MILITIA LEADER SA'D HADDAD WOULD DENY UNIFIL ACCESS TO SOME OF THE TERRITORY UNDER CHRISTIAN CONTROL.
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